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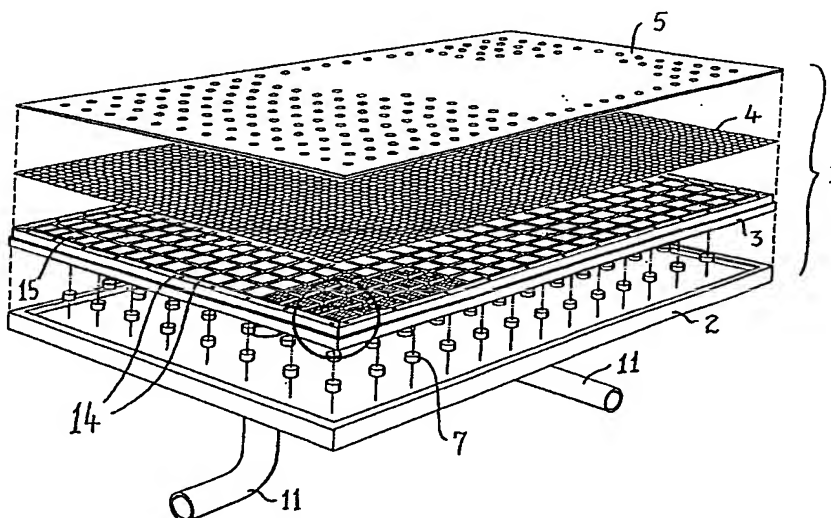
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(54) Title: **PLATEN FOR USE IN PRODUCT ENCAPSULATION**



(57) Abstract: A platen (1) which can be quickly evacuated and used in product encapsulation and like processes is provided where the platen (1) is configured to be gaseously evacuated. The platen (1) comprises a base plate (2), at least one gas evacuation conduit (11) configured to communicate through the base plate (2), and a support plate (3) spaced apart from the base plate (2) to create a plenum chamber (9) between the base plate (2) and the support plate (3) where each gas evacuation conduit (11) is in communication with the plenum chamber (9). The platen (1) further comprises a first array of channels (14) formed in the surface of the support plate (3) remote from the plenum chamber (9) wherein a plurality of mesas (15) are defined in those areas of the support plate surface intermediate the channels and a plurality of apertures (19) located in the channels (14) and each passing through the support plate (3), the apertures (19) extending between the support plate (3) and the plenum chamber (9).